

YMCA SPORTS: BARB'S PHILOSOPHY

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In speaking with Barb Beckett, the program director at the Grand Traverse Bay YCMA of all sports, basketball is representative of the core of the work we do at the Y. Beckett is in her 26th year with this YMCA and she has taught or managed organized sports most of her working life.

"We make sure that we can integrate our core values in the sport that we present. In teaching, coaching, practicing, and competition in all sports we do at the Y, we base our approach in keeping with our Judeo-Christian mission and values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility," said Beckett. "This winter's basketball program is a good example of this approach."

For 17 years, the Grand Traverse Bay YMCA has sponsored a series of winter basketball tournaments held from January to March to promote basketball team sports in our region. These tournaments are conducted in a positive and values based fashion. "They are designed to that everyone can compete and everyone has fun doing it," according to Beckett.

Now in its fifth year, the Blizzard 5-on-5 Tournament is for boys' basketball teams in 7th and 8th grade on Saturday, January 29. The Blizzard Tournament grows each year with a 15 team limit. Teams come throughout the region to compete. These teams played 30 games last year. Divisions are formed for each grade and they play in a round robin format with each team assured at least 3 games. "The tournament was founded to fill a need for 7th and 8th grade basketball teams being able to extend their season a little longer while most middle school season last only through December. Games are held in area Traverse City gyms, all games are officiated, and awards given to division top place holders," said Beckett. Registration is \$200 per team and due no later than January 19 at the YMCA.

The Men's Winter Jam Basketball Tournament is the oldest competition of its kind in the region having been held for over 17 years. This year it will be held on February 5 and 6. "As part of the tradition of Super Bowl weekend, the Winter Jam features competition between various men's basketball teams throughout the region with a 15 team limit for this tourney competing at Traverse City area gyms. There are several divisions offered to differing levels of competition with each team guaranteed 4 games, said Beckett. Registration for the first 15 teams only at \$200 per team is due January 24. The Tournament guaranteed to be completed by 3:00 pm on Sunday.

The final basketball tournament in the Y season is the Midnight Madness 3-on-3 Tournament held on March 18 for boys and girls in grades 5-9. "The tournament is now in its 13th year with games that can last until midnight," commented Beckett. Registration is \$120 for teams of 3 - 4 players each and begins at 5:00 pm.

New this year is a girls only basketball league for grades 2 to 5. "This is a competitive league where teams are generally formed by schools," said Beckett. The league will be held on Saturdays from January 15 to February 19 at the Y Main Facility on 3000 Racquet Club Drive. Registration deadline is January 7 and there is an 11 player maximum per team.

"You can reach we reach out to boys and girls from grade 2 to 9 in these basketball programs, teaching them a great sport, and in a values-based, caring atmosphere not found in other leagues or tournaments," concludes Beckett.

More information on these programs or any of the other 65 programs can be found on our website at www.gtbayymca.org or 933-9622.